

Muskie Is Accused Of Creating Fear

By Don Oberdorfer
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Presidential Press Secretary Ronald L. Ziegler charged yesterday that Sen. Edmund S. Muskie of Maine and others are attempting to create "a feeling of fear and intimidation" among the people of the country.

The motive behind this effort, Ziegler charged, is "blatantly political."

Speaking at a White House news briefing "as a spokesman of this administration," Ziegler said nothing would be served by a formal investigation into Muskie's statements that the FBI engaged in extensive surveillance of Earth Day activities last April.

This is so because Muskie's statements were "clearly . . . in the political category," the press secretary declared.

The Maine senator, a leading prospective candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1972, said he would expect Ziegler to describe anything he did as "political."

Muskie, who is traveling in New Hampshire, added that administration "reluctance to come to grips with the facts is of considerable interest."

Ziegler had been reacting sharply for several days to questions about surveillance by the FBI, charging that unnamed persons were attempting to misrepresent administration policy and creating a climate of fear. Until yesterday, however, he had not used such terms as "blatantly political" and he had not specifically charged Muskie by name with being politically motivated.

The Muskie phase of the FBI controversy began Wednesday when the senator inserted

into the Congressional Record the FBI report giving details of the planning and observance of Earth Day in Washington last April 22.

In an accompanying Senate speech, Muskie said he had been informed that this was only one of 40 to 60 FBI reports of Earth Day rallies.

See SNOOP, A8, Col. 1



REP. JOHN DOWDY
... talked for record

A8 Saturday, April 17, 1971 THE WASHINGTON POST

Muskie Claim Called Politics

SNOOP, From A1

He described "general political surveillance" of events such as environmental rallies as "repugnant" and counter to the traditions and practices of political freedom.

On Thursday night, Attorney General John N. Mitchell said in a statement that surveillance of the 1970 Earth Day rally in Washington related only to the presence of persons with "known records" of criminal behavior and to the protection of the right of peaceful assembly.

Mitchell did not name anyone with a "known record" in his statement, but Justice Department officials called the attention of newsmen to the presence at the rally of Rennie Davis, convicted of inciting to riot as a member of the Chi-

cago Seven. Mitchell said in his statement that "the FBI has no interest in an Earth Day meeting as such."

At a news conference in New Hampshire yesterday, Muskie called on Mitchell to make public all of the FBI reports concerning Earth Day 1970. The senator reiterated his impression that the FBI activity that day was "general political surveillance . . . watching the activities of citizens as they express themselves, register protests on public questions."

"Let us judge for ourselves," Muskie declared. If the publication of all the Earth Day reports shows Mitchell's interpretation is correct, "then they will speak for themselves." If Mitchell's points are not supported, "I would hope he would take another look at them himself," the senator added.

Justice Department spokesman Powell Moore said last night that the department has "no plans" to make public the Earth Day reports. He said that "not more than three or four" Earth Day rallies around the country were under surveillance last year.

As in past statements, Ziegler did not address himself to the specific events of Earth Day 1970 in his remarks to newsmen at the White House yesterday.

Ziegler declared that "claims and charges" had been aired with "the objective of creating a feeling of fear and intimidation among the people of this country, that the administration and the FBI has

as one of their motives and objectives to spy on people and to do so in an indiscriminate way, monitoring conversations and intruding on the privacy of individuals. That is not the case."

Asked what course of action he would recommend to those who believe the FBI has overstepped the bounds of legitimate inquiry, Ziegler replied that the administration had suggested a congressional investigation of the charges by Rep. Hale Boggs that the telephone lines of members of Congress have been tapped.

Under questioning, Ziegler declined to say that the administration would support a congressional study of Muskie's statements or of revelations that Rep. John Dowdy was subjected to electronic investigation. That is when Ziegler said Muskie's statement was "clearly" political.

During a question and answer period at Central High School in Manchester, N.H., yesterday, Muskie was asked by a young student if he would fire J. Edgar Hoover as FBI Director if he were President.

"Using the inevitable Northern New England tact and diplomacy, I suppose I would invite him to resign," replied the senator. There was a loud ovation from the high school students.